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SUBJECT: S/CT COORDINATOR CRUMPTON DISCUSSES
COUNTERTERRORISM WITH UAE STATE SECURITY DIRECTOR

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (S) Summary: During a May 7 meeting, Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton and UAE State Security Director Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed al-Nahyan discussed counterterrorism cooperation and the need to find new ways to coordinate intelligence activities and counter-terror policy to face the Iranian threat. While the UAE is aware that Iranian intelligence is selecting potential targets inside the UAE, and the Emiratis want to defend their interests, Sheikh Hazza also made it clear that his government does not want to provoke Iran. Hazza reported that the State Security Directorate (SSD) had created a new unit to respond to Iranian activity and Shi'a extremists, including Hizballah. Concerning the Palestinian situation, Sheikh Hazza stated that if Hamas were to govern successfully, it would embolden other Islamists in the Arab world. In his view, Fatah should be encouraged to reform so that it can provide a viable alternative to Hamas. Sheikh Hazza's elaboration on the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE and in the region, including the organization's structure and methods, was the most detailed account of the Islamist threat we have heard from the UAE leadership to date. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On May 7, Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton and Ambassador met with UAE State Security Director Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed al-Nahyan, SSD Director of External Relations Col. Hamed al-Shamsi, and SSD Director for Counterterrorism Maj. Saif Majed al-Meheiri. Crumpton was accompanied by S/CT Senior Advisor Michael Hurley, and Polchief was note taker.

¶3. (S) Crumpton and Sheikh Hazza reviewed recent progress on U.S.-UAE counterterrorism cooperation, including the recent Joint Terrorist Financing Coordinating Committee's deliberations (septel) and the proposed U.S. Customs (DHS/ICE) - Dubai Customs Tactical Cash Courier operation. Crumpton noted that he would be testifying before the House International Relations Committee about the Country Reports on Terrorism later this month and that he would be naming the UAE as a "key partner" in the War on Terror.

Iranian Threat

¶4. (S) Sheikh Hazza spoke for several minutes about the counterterrorism challenges facing the UAE, focusing

especially on the Iranian threat. He noted his satisfaction with the level of U.S.-UAE cooperation in fighting Al Qaida and terrorism in the post-9/11 period, but he talked about the need to find new ways to coordinate intelligence activities to face the Iranian threat. "We need to bring all our efforts and resources together to face this crisis. ... Iran is a large neighbor," he said. Sheikh Hazza mentioned the UAE's ongoing interest in working with "friends" to help stabilize the situation in Iraq and reduce Iranian infiltration inside Iraq. The UAE fears that Iranian infiltration will not stop with Iraq, but will spread to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain as well, he added.

¶ 15. (S) In the eighties, Sheikh Hazza continued, Iranians smuggled weapons and explosives into the UAE, but SSD was able to intercept these shipments. Iranians have also attempted to penetrate countries by exporting extremists abroad. The UAE is trying its best to prevent this, but at the same time, the Emiratis are being careful to avoid conflict with Iran, Sheikh Hazza told Crumpton. "There is Iranian intelligence activity in the UAE. They are gathering as much information as they can for their future preparations so they are able to identify many targets in the UAE," he said. Sheikh Hazza also expressed concern that Hizballah in Lebanon was serving as an important source of intelligence for Iran.

¶ 16. (S) Sheikh Hazza assured Crumpton that the UAE intends to protect itself and its friends like the United States that have military and other assets in the UAE. "We need to coordinate and cooperation on Iranian intelligence activities," he said. However, Sheikh Hazza reiterated that the UAE did not want to provoke Iran: "We are not going to harm Iran. We are going to defend our interests."

¶ 17. (S) Crumpton assessed that it was important that Iran not be seen as a "monolithic entity." There are different actors, such as President Ahmedinejad, the clerics, and the

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students. Ahmedinejad and the clergy are both hardliners, but there is political animosity between them, he said. "Our policy toward Iran must be geared toward these different entities," Crumpton asserted. Sheikh Hazza asked about the timeframe for this policy, and also whether the U.S. intended to step up pressure on Iran. Crumpton responded that the approach would be long-term and welcomed "specific intelligence and policy recommendations from Iran's neighbors ... We are going to be determined and careful." Crumpton spoke of a coalition of countries willing to work together to stop Iran, as well as "specific measures, each calibrated based on our objectives." He welcomed UAE advice on how Ahmedinejad's power might be diminished. For his part, Sheikh Hazza asked Crumpton for his views on Russia's offer to enrich uranium on behalf of the Iranians.

Hizballah and Iranian Ties

¶ 18. (S) Crumpton and Sheikh Hazza agreed that Iran posed a present threat and that Hizballah was an extension of Iran. Hizballah also gives political and financial backing to Palestinian rejectionists and has "growing links" in southern Iraq, Crumpton assessed. Hizballah owes its sophistication to Iranian training. "We know they operate inside the U.S. They are patient ... and very aggressive," posing a terrorism threat as well as a counterintelligence threat, Crumpton told Sheikh Hazza. The United States would be grateful if the UAE could share any information on Hizballah and Iran. Sheikh Hazza said the SSD's newly created special unit to deal with Iranian activity and Shi'a extremists would enable greater cooperation and coordination between the UAE and U.S. Crumpton emphasized the importance of the U.S. and the UAE coordinating thinking on counter-terror policy.

Support for Palestinians

¶9. (S) Asked for his assessment of Hamas and the situation in the Palestinian territories, Sheikh Hazza responded that if Hamas were to successfully govern, it would embolden other Islamists in the Arab world. It was important, however, for the international community and for Palestinians to encourage Fatah to reform so that Fatah could provide a viable alternative to Hamas, Sheikh Hazza said. Crumpton agreed that Hamas' likely failure as a governing institution will be a lesson for others.

Disdain for Muslim Brotherhood

¶10. (S) Crumpton sought Sheikh Hazza's views on the Muslim Brotherhood and its operations within the region. Sheikh Hazza underscored his country's dislike for Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood. "We believe that in the future they are going to commit the same stupid things as al-Qaida. There is no difference between the ideology of al-Qaida and the Muslim Brotherhood," he insisted. Asked by the Ambassador whether the Muslim Brotherhood had made efforts to infiltrate schools and mosques in the UAE, Sheikh Hazza explained that Muslim Brotherhood extremists were "very organized." Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers in the UAE belong to a larger Muslim Brotherhood structure, he continued. The SSD believes the Muslim Brotherhood has helped al-Qaida by issuing fatwas. "Just watch Yusuf al-Qaradawi," Sheikh Hazza exclaimed, referring to the Muslim scholar who has a weekly show on al-Jazeera satellite television. Within the Muslim Brotherhood structure, there are different levels of ideology, with those advocating violence at one extreme, he said. "We think we can counter them by changing the educational system and through social development," Sheikh Hazza asserted.

¶11. (S) Sheikh Hazza offered further details on the Muslim Brotherhood in the UAE, noting that it consists of a main organization and several smaller organizations (majlis al-shourah). These smaller units try to infiltrate student groups and teachers. There is also an armed unit. The UAE security forces have captured members of their armed unit, and a Ministry of Interior investigation is ongoing. The Muslim Brotherhood's "final target" is to capture power, so the organization is attempting to recruit members of the UAE armed forces, he said. In the region, the Muslim Brotherhood is attempting to influence the educational system, he continued. The group has reportedly put codes in textbooks

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designed to influence students' political views. Sheikh Hazza further described how each cell, or family, has a leader and a deputy leader. These leaders, or emirs, meet annually in Egypt, Turkey, England, and Germany, according to Sheikh Hazza. Muslim Brotherhood members play 7 percent of their income to the organization. The Muslim Brotherhood has commercial interests and supports charitable concerns, he added. Ambassador reminded Sheikh Hazza that the USG had passed a paper to the UAEG in January requesting investigation of Human Appeal International, an Emirate of Ajman-based NGO with Muslim Brotherhood ties suspected of serving as a "feeder" for Hamas and elements of the al-Qaida network.

¶12. (S) The UAE's concern about the Muslim Brotherhood stems in part from the fact that the organization is behaving the way Iran is behaving in Iraq, said Sheikh Hazza. He assessed that the Muslim Brotherhood "could make a problem for the whole world," although he said that the UAE did not face a serious "problem" from the Muslim Brotherhood. He promised to make a further presentation about the Muslim Brotherhood this summer during his next visit to the United States (scheduled to take place "before September").

¶13. (S) Sheikh Hazza told Crumpton that the UAEG believes it

is responding to terrorism "in a very frank way" even though it is not always capable of doing everything. Sheikh Hazza admitted feeling "depressed" by the negative publicity his country received during the Dubai Ports World affair.

However, "For the UAE Government, we are not upset (about what was said). We know that people judge without knowing where the UAE is located," he said. The UAE is trying to counter extremism and ensure its security by expanding its economic relations, developing its educational system, and ensuring a moderate form of religious expression. The UAE hopes to serve as a model of cooperation between the West and the Arab world, Sheikh Hazza added. Crumpton agreed that the UAE's economic development and its many examples of globalization demonstrate how interdependent countries have become. While Sheikh Hazza said he would like the U.S. public and Congress to have a favorable impression of the UAE, he cautioned that there are many details of its counterterrorism cooperation with the United States that cannot be publicized -- for the UAE's own protection.

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